

FIELD TRIP REPORT OF REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS OFFICER, CAIRO

May 1-10, 1962

I. SYRIA - Damascus

A. Official Contacts

Ambassador Ridgway B. Knight, FSO Curtis F. Jones - former PO; and FSO Leslie D. Polk, new PO.

B. Bookstores Visited

Several Bookstores. (Not otherwise identified)

C. Names of Useful Contacts to PO Program

None

D. Comments

1. Due to the instability of the political situation in Syria, very few new publications have appeared. Publishers here seem to be in a state of numbness - afraid to spend any money until the situation crystallizes.

2. Again, the recent slow response to Departmental publications requests is due to the abnormal situation which the officers of this Embassy find themselves faced with as well as a change of PO assignment. The RPO visited countless bookstores including Atlas Bookstore which usually keeps a sharp eye open for newly published material. A few publications were acquired including a new Directory.

3. With regard to the airmail which was sent by the RPO in March to the various posts concerning the requirement for publications on Military Academies, a reply is being prepared jointly by the Damascus PO and the Military Attache.

4. Concerning voiced Departmental complaints regarding newspaper receipts from Aleppo and Latakia, the RPO received the assurances of FSO Polk that a despatch will be prepared shortly on the current status of all Syrian newspapers including those from the aforementioned areas.

II. IRAQ - Baghdad

A. Official Contacts

FSO William C. Lakeland, Political Officer; FSO John M. Lord, Jr., PO

B. Bookstores Visited

All leading bookstores in Baghdad.

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C. Names of Useful Contacts to PO Program

None

D. Comments

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1. Perhaps the recently noted delays in response to Departmental publications requests from this post is due to: (a) the many extra problems officers of this Embassy are continually confronted with due to the unsettled political situation and (b) to the change of Publications Officer recently effected. The RPO feels confident that procurement of material and response to the Department's publications requests in general will show marked improvement from now on as [REDACTED] is very interested in publications procurement and is an Arabic linguist.

2. On the other hand, the RPO carefully checked over the list of publications that Embassy, Baghdad has been forwarding to the Department and found it as up to date as it was during his last visit. In the RPO's opinion the reporting on the local press that has been done by this Embassy recently, has been excellent. In addition to periodic reports on the press, the post recently prepared a local press summary which was forwarded to the Department as despatch #701 of March 26, 1962.

3. Publishing in general in Iraq is dormant and few new publications have been produced since the RPO was here on his last visit.

4. Communist publications are available but not as profusely abundant as reported previously.

5. The RPO believes that Baghdad's allotments for WF, SP and IR should be increased for the next FY.

III. TURKEY - Istanbul (May 2-3) - Ankara (May 3-4)

A. Official Contacts

1. Istanbul: Consul Ben H. Brown, Jr., and FSR Bertha Carp, PO.
2. Ankara: FSO Thomas N. Metcalf, PO.

B. Bookstores Visited

Miscellaneous Bookstores. (Not otherwise identified)

C. Names of Useful Contacts to PO Program

None

D. Comments

Istanbul

1. Miss Carp stated that practically no new publications have been

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put out locally in the past year. The RPO reviewed the Department's correspondence and found that all current requests for publications procurement have been satisfied.

Ankara

2. In Ankara, the RPO was gratified to find that the PO-FSO Thomas N. Metcalf is an able and efficient officer, profoundly interested in the publications procurement program. FSO Metcalf is also a student of Turkish.

3. The RPO and FSO Metcalf visited several bookstores as well as the Ministry of Press, Broadcasting and Tourism. Several new publications were obtained.

4. The Medical University of Ankara was also visited on this trip and numerous medical publications were procured for NIM.

5. All Communist publications are banned in Turkey and none were seen.

IV. GREECE -- Athens

A. Official Contacts

FSO William W. McGrew, PO; FSO Orme Wilson

B. Bookstores Visited

Several Bookstores (Not otherwise identified)

C. Names of Useful Contacts to PO Program

None

D. Comments

1. Despite the fact that the Embassy was deluged with delegates and preparations for the NATO Conference, Mr. William McGrew, of the Embassy Staff, devoted considerable time to the RPO. Unfortunately, Miss Skylodomou was on annual leave and therefore the RPO was unable to congratulate her personally on the excellent job of procuring and reporting she has been doing on publications from this area. This, however, was emphatically conveyed to her chief, who will in turn commend her. It must be remembered, on the other hand, that such excellent work has been under the guidance of the PO, Athens.

2. Athens kiosks and bookstores feature quite a few Communist publications in English, French and Greek. Communist periodicals are also available on practically all newsstands. The RPO suggested that the PO should send copies of these periodicals to the Department at regular intervals.

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3. According to Embassy Officials, the World Press Handbook is very adequate as a survey of Greek press. The fact, the RPO was informed that the section on Greece in the handbook was actually prepared by Embassy personnel.

V. LEBANON - Beirut

A. Official Contacts

None

B. Bookstores Visited

Various Bookstores

C. Names of Useful Contacts to PO Program

None

D. Comment FOIA b3b

1. [REDACTED] has been away from Beirut for four to five weeks and therefore the RPO was unable to discuss publications acquisition matters with him. Nevertheless, the RPO, checked with the Embassy procurement section and found that all Departmental publications requests are being met promptly.

2. The publishing situation in Beirut continues as reported on previous occasions - 90% translations and about 10% creative works. The RPO plans to discuss the publications situation at Beirut in depth during his forthcoming home leave (June - Sept. 1962)

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